

PROPOSED STATEWIDE AND REGIONAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT AND HABITAT PROTECTION RULE CHANGES

(If approved, these proposed rule changes would take effect on April 1, 2007, unless otherwise indicated.)

Question 21: Clamming regulations - Prohibit harvest of live clams from inland waters.

Current non-commercial clamming regulations include a daily bag limit of 50 pounds, with no size limit, no closed season, and no distinction between species, although the harvest of threatened and endangered species is prohibited. Because most inland streams and lakes are small, clams are easy to collect. Recent low water and drought conditions make more clams accessible. Of the 51 species of native clams found in Wisconsin, 25 are classified as either Endangered, Threatened or of Special Concern (11 species Endangered, 7 Threatened, 7 Special Concern). Although threatened and endangered clams are protected by law, it is very difficult to identify different species of clams, even for scientists.

At no time in their history have clams faced a more serious threat to their continued existence than the present. Throughout much of the Midwest, native clams are experiencing population declines due to poor water quality, increased harvest and competition from exotic bivalves---most notably, the exotic zebra and quagga mussels. Continued impacts from impoundments and damming, delivery of polluted runoff from agricultural and urban sources, and loss of fish hosts currently limit statewide populations. There are systems which have not fully rebounded from intensive commercial harvest in the early 1990s. Most mussel biologists agree that statewide (as well as regionally and nationally), mussel populations are declining, and 70% of the mussel species in America are considered at risk. If adopted, this regulation would be implemented in fall, 2006.

Under this proposal, shells of species of dead clams which are not listed as endangered or threatened can still be collected.

➤ **Do you favor prohibiting the harvest of live clams from inland waters of Wisconsin?**

21. YES _____ NO _____

Questions 22-24: Menominee River lake sturgeon regulations – Establish catch-and-release only fishery below Hattie St. dam (Marinette County), and replace the current 50"/70" alternating minimum size limit with an annual 60" minimum between the first Saturday in September and September 30 above Hattie St. dam (Marinette County).

In the spring of 2005, population estimates calculated below White Rapids, Grand Rapids and Menominee Dam revealed lower than expected numbers of sturgeon. The exploitation rate has substantially exceeded the 5% rate established by WDNR for healthy lake sturgeon populations. In 2003, exploitation estimates exceeded 10%, and exceeded 20% in 2005. Previous harvest years from 1983 through 2003, indicate that more than 60% of the harvest occurred in the 50-54.9 inch size group. In order to maintain a viable lake sturgeon population less than 50% of the harvest should be composed of fish within 5 inches of the minimum size limit. The Menominee River contains the largest lake sturgeon population of all Lake Michigan river systems and its recovery is crucial towards the recovery of lake sturgeon populations in other watersheds of Lake Michigan. Currently, Green Bay and its tributaries (other than the Menominee River) have a closed fishery for lake sturgeon. The current regulation for the Menominee River (above and below the Hattie St. Dam) is an annually alternating 50"/70" minimum size limit, and the season is open between the first Saturday in September and November 1. The State of Michigan recently approved these proposed changes for this boundary water. If adopted, these regulations would be implemented in fall, 2006.

- **Do you favor a catch and release only regulation with, no possession of lake sturgeon allowed in the Menominee River below Hattie Street Dam (Marinette County) to the mouth of the river?**

22. YES_____ NO_____

- **Do you favor a change in the size limit to a 60 inch minimum size for lake sturgeon in the Menominee River upstream from the Hattie Street dam (Marinette County)?**

23. YES_____ NO_____

- **Do you favor a season length for lake sturgeon in the Menominee River from the first Saturday in September through September 30?**

24. YES_____ NO_____

QUESTION 25: Sinker release devices – Ban the use of devices that intentionally release lead weights upon fish strikes

Conservation Wardens have received complaints that sport fishers are running sinker releases on their trolling lines on Lake Michigan. The device allows the attached sinker to release or drop away when a fish hits the line. The sinker release is typically used with ski boards that allow the side fishing to function in the same manner as a down rigger. We are advised that the typically lead weights of ½ to 4 lb. are used on the lines to get the lure down to the desired depths.

Investigation has revealed that sinker releases are being used more than initially expected. We have been advised that the devices have been used by fishers for the past 30 years. In an interview, one sport troller estimated that he had dropped 3,000 lb. of lead into the lake and that he has 11,000 lb of used lead in storage for molding new weights.

Conservation Wardens routinely issue citations to individuals who toss a soda or beer can into state waters (Penalty: \$186), which is manufactured with a harmless/inert metal.

This question proposes defining a “sinker release device” as any device that is designed to release a weight or sinker from a fishing line upon a strike from a fish while trolling.

- **Do you favor defining “sinker release devices” as stated above, and prohibiting their use in waters of the State?**

25. YES_____ NO_____

Question 26: Ice shelter removal dates – Change deadlines for removal of ice shelters to Sunday after March 1 (south of Hwy 64) or Sunday after March 12 (north of Hwy 64)

Under current law, ice fishing shacks must be removed from inland waters by a specific date in March (March 1 south of Hwy 64, March 15 north of Hwy 64).. Some years this date falls on a weekday and other years it falls on at weekend. Some individuals feel that this constant date each year forces the angler to take a day off of work to remove the shack or remove it the weekend before the removal deadline when it falls on a weekday.

The current removal dates have been in place for more than 32 years. While the DNR has never received a complaint from the public about the current deadline, we have agreed to put the question forward to gauge public support. If removal dates for inland waters are changed, there will continue to be different removal dates for the Wisconsin/Iowa, Wisconsin/Minnesota, or Wisconsin/Michigan boundary waters, or outlying waters of the state.

- **Do you favor changing the dates for ice shelter removal from inland waters to the Sunday after March 12 in waters north of Highway 64 (current removal date is March 15) and to the Sunday after March 1 for waters south of Highway 64 (current removal date March 1)?**

26. YES _____ NO _____

Question 27: Waters open to bowfishing at night – Increase the to night bowfishing

This proposal would increase the number of waters that shooting and arrow is legal from sunset to sunrise. Currently there are 53 lakes or flowages open to night bow fishing in 27 counties. These waters were first opened to night bow fishing on April 1, 2000.

This proposal would allow a bow and arrow to be possessed and used for spearing rough fish on the following inland lakes at any time during the open season for spearing as specified in s. NR 20.20: all inland lakes in Adams, Calumet, Chippewa, Clark, Columbia, Crawford, Dane, Dodge, Dunn, Eau Claire, Fond du Lac, Grant, Green, Green Lake, Iowa, Jackson, Jefferson, Juneau, Lafayette, Marathon, Marquette, Milwaukee, Monroe, Outagamie, Richland, Rock, Sauk, Trempealeau, Walworth, Winnebago and Wood counties; Lake Neshonoc, La Crosse county; Cedar and Wappogasset lakes, Polk county; Wisconsin River Flowage and Lake Dubay, Portage County; Tichigan and Wind lakes, Racine county; Potato lake, Rusk county; Cedar lake, St. Croix county; Shawano lake, Shawano county; Big Muskego lake and Lac LaBelle, Waukesha county; Lake Poygan, Waushara county.

The following lakes would be excluded from night bowfishing: Lake Wissota, Chippewa County; Blackhawk, Cox Hollow and Twin Valley Lakes, Iowa County; Lake Wazee, Jackson County; Devils and Mirror Lakes, Sauk County.

- **Do you favor expanding opportunities for night bowfishing in lakes statewide, as specified above?**

27. YES _____ NO _____

Question 28: St. Croix River opener for walleye and northern pike

There is a discrepancy between the MN and WI opening dates on the walleye & northern pike season on the Lower St. Croix River. Wisconsin changed its rule from the "Saturday nearest May 1st" to the "first Saturday in May", in 2001, which became effective April 1, 2002. This change was made after an agreement between both states at a meeting in 2000. Although Wisconsin followed through on the agreement, Minnesota did not. Simply because of the way the calendar dates have fallen since that time, it has not been an issue and went unnoticed until the spring of 2005. Minnesota officials have since stated they are no longer interested in changing their opening date for walleye and northern pike to "the first Saturday in May." This proposal would move the date of Wisconsin's opener on the St. Croix River back to "the Saturday nearest May 1," beginning in 2007.

- **Do you favor changing the date of the St. Croix River fishing opener for walleye and northern pike to “the Saturday nearest May 1,” to be consistent with Minnesota regulations?**

28. YES_____ NO_____

Question 29: St. Louis River sauger length limit

There is a discrepancy between the MN and WI regulations for sauger. Currently, Wisconsin rules list a 15” minimum length limit, while Minnesota rules list a “no minimum” size limit. This proposal would remove Wisconsin's 15” minimum for sauger in the St. Louis River and replace it with no minimum size limit. The minimum length limit for walleye (15” in both states) and the aggregate bag limit for walleye and sauger would be unaffected.

- **Do you favor changing the 15” minimum for sauger in the St. Louis River to “no minimum size limit” for consistent regulations on Wisconsin and Minnesota boundary waters?**

29. YES_____ NO_____

Question 30: Menominee River, Lake Michigan, and Green Bay walleye, sauger, and hybrids regulations

The walleye fishery in the Menominee River and adjoining area of Green Bay has become very productive and is exceedingly popular with sport fishers. Inconsistent fishing regulations in Marinette/Menominee area are contributing to extensive confusion among anglers and creating major law enforcement problems for both Wisconsin and Michigan officers. This is particularly true during the very popular walleye spawning run in April when an angler at the mouth of the Menominee River could be under three different sets of regulations depending upon which side of the boat he/she is fishing:

- The Menominee River and portion of Green Bay between the break walls is under the WI/MI Boundary Waters regulations (NR 23) with a 1 walleye bag limit and 15” size limit from March 2 to the first Sunday in May and a 5 walleye bag limit with a 15” size limit for the remainder of the year.
- The Wisconsin waters of Green Bay have a continuous season with a 3 walleye bag limit and no size limit.
- The Michigan waters of Green Bay are closed to fishing walleyes from March 1 – May 14th with a 5 walleye bag limit and 15” size limit for the remainder of the year.

These problems are further complicated by the fact that the WI/MI state line runs southeasterly at an angle of 101 deg. 15 min. from the center between the east ends of the break walls at Marinette/Menominee.

Question 30 (continued from previous page): Menominee River, Lake Michigan, and Green Bay walleye, sauger, and hybrids regulations

The proposed changes will create uniform seasons, size limits and bag limits for walleyes on the adjoining waters of the WI/MI Boundary Waters downstream from the Hattie St. Dam, the Bay of Green Bay, Green Bay tributaries, northern Lake Michigan and the northern Lake Michigan tributary streams. This proposal will also make the walleye size limits and bag limits on these waters consistent with the general state-wide walleye regulations during the regular fishing season. The State of Michigan has advanced rule changes that will create matching regulations on its adjoining waters. This will reduce confusion and problems for sport anglers, especially in the area of the mouth of the Menominee River.

In summary, the proposal will:

1. Retain the current continuous open season in Lake Michigan and its tributaries north of Waldo Blvd. (Manitowoc), as well as in Green Bay and its major tributaries (including the Menominee River upstream to the Hattie St. dam). Between the first Saturday in May and the first Sunday in March, the bag limit will be 5 fish (currently 3), and the minimum length limit will be 15" (currently no minimum). Between the Monday after the first Sunday in March and the Friday before the first Saturday in May, the daily bag limit will be 1 fish, with a 15" minimum. The Fox River from the DePere Dam downstream to Green Bay will continue to have a 28 inch minimum size limit , 1 fish daily bag limit between the Monday after the first Sunday in March and the Friday before the first Saturday in May and a 3 fish daily bag limit with no minimum length during the remainder of the year;
2. in Lake Michigan and its tributaries south of Waldo Blvd (Manitowoc), there will be a continuous open season with a 5 fish daily bag limit and 15" minimum;
3. in minor tributaries to Green Bay upstream to the first dam, the open season will be between the first Saturday in May and the first Sunday in March, with a 5 fish (currently 3) daily bag limit and a 15" minimum length limit (currently no minimum).

The Warm Water Committee of the Conservation Congress unanimously endorsed the proposed changes at its committee meeting on Sept. 23, 2005. The State of Michigan has approved those changes which affect Wisconsin-Michigan boundary waters. If adopted, these regulations would be implemented in fall, 2006.

➤ **Do you favor adopting the above proposed changes to the walleye, sauger, and**

30. YES_____ NO_____

hybrid walleye/sauger regulations in Lake Michigan, Green Bay, and their tributaries?

Question 31: Fox River muskellunge season and regulation changes

Great Lakes spotted muskellunge (hereafter muskellunge) have been stocked into Green Bay since 1989 in an attempt to reintroduce the once native species. Muskellunge have also been stocked in the Winnebago System since 2001 and Little Lake Butte des Morts since 2003 to expand reintroduction efforts and create possible brood sources for future hatchery production. Muskellunge reintroduced into Green Bay are protected with a 50 inch minimum size limit, allowing them to spawn multiple times before potentially being harvested. Muskellunge stocked elsewhere fall under a 34 inch minimum size limit. Data collected during surveys on Green Bay indicate that these muskellunge grow quickly, and spawning fish of known age captured during 2005 were 37-43.75 inches total length at age-5+ or age-6+. Some muskellunge stocked into Little Lake Butte des Morts as yearlings in 2003 will likely attain harvestable size during 2005 at age-3+. These fish will also be vulnerable to harvest during 2006 and part of 2007 before they spawn for the first time during April or May of 2007. Some of the muskellunge stocked into Little Lake Butte des Morts will likely move downstream, requiring a 50 inch minimum throughout the lower Fox River. A sound reintroduction strategy would not allow harvest of a species before it spawns for the first time. Muskellunge in Little Lake Butte des Morts and the lower Fox River should be protected with a 50 inch minimum size limit to allow each fish to spawn multiple times before reaching harvestable size.

- **Do you favor increasing the minimum length limit for muskellunge in the Fox River between Lake Winnebago and the DePere dam, including Little Lake Butte des Morts, from 34" to 50", and changing the season opening date from the first Saturday in May to the Saturday closest to Memorial Day?**

31. YES _____ NO _____

Question 32: Lake Winnebago muskellunge regulation changes

Great Lakes spotted muskellunge (hereafter muskellunge) have been stocked into Lake Winnebago since 2001 in an attempt to reintroduce the once native species. The Upriver Lakes (Winneconne, Poygan, and Butte des Morts) have been stocked since

2002. The primary long-term objective of the program is to restore a self-sustaining muskellunge population in the Winnebago system. A secondary long-term objective is to produce a fishable, high quality to trophy muskellunge fishery on the Winnebago system. Muskellunge reintroduced into Green Bay are protected with a 50 inch minimum size limit, allowing them to spawn multiple times before possibly being harvested. Data collected during surveys on Green Bay indicate that these muskellunge grow quickly, and spawning fish of known age captured during 2005 were 37-43.75 inches total length at age-5+ or age-6+.

- **Do you favor increasing the minimum length limit for muskellunge in the Lake Winnebago system (including the Upriver Lakes) from 34" to 50"?**

32. YES _____ NO _____

Question 33: Sunset extension for experimental Wisconsin River walleye and sauger regulation

Currently, there is an experimental protected slot limit from 20 to 28" for walleye, sauger and hybrids on the Wisconsin River from the Prairie du Sac Dam (Columbia and Sauk Counties) upstream to the Grandfather Dam (Lincoln County), the Yellow River (Juneau, Wood Counties) and the Lemonweir River (Juneau Co) with a 5 fish daily bag limit, of which only one fish may be over 28". This experimental regulation is scheduled to expire March 31, 2007. Evaluation studies done before implementation of the slot limit and during the 3 years since the regulation was enacted in April 2002 on Lake Wisconsin and Lake Wausau found some improvement in 20"+ walleye and sauger, but those effects cannot be definitively attributed to the regulation.

The initial sunset was too short to evaluate this experimental regulation. Fish hatched in 2005 would be the first to live a full life cycle in the absence of adult fish which were potentially impacted by the previous regulation. These fish will reach full vulnerability in 2009, and cannot be expected to enter the experimental protected slot until several years later (2011-2012). Fish which had reached 20" prior to implementation of the slot can be expected to remain in the system longer and fish can be expected to enter the protected slot at similar rates pre- and post-regulation. By extending the regulation through 2014 the Department is afforded the opportunity to evaluate the regulation after enough time has passed to observe its effects. Such evaluations should be conducted between 2008-2012, based upon the biology described. This question would extend the period of evaluation to March 31, 2014.

- **Do you favor extending the sunset clause from 2007 to 2014 on the experimental slot limit for walleye, sauger and hybrids on the Wisconsin River from the Prairie du Sac Dam (Columbia, Sauk Counties) upstream to the Grandfather Dam (Lincoln County), Yellow River (Juneau, Wood Counties), Lemonweir River (Juneau Co), in which there is a 15" minimum length limit and a 20-28" protected slot, with a daily bag limit of 5, with only one fish allowed over 28"?**

33. YES _____ NO _____

Question 34: License exemption for individuals younger than 16 taking turtles

It was brought to our attention that there is no exception from the need for a hunting or fishing license for individuals under the age of 16 for the taking of turtles. It was not the intent of this rule to mean that someone who is exempt from a fishing license due to being under the age of 16 must have a fishing license if they want to take, possess, or control a turtle, nor is this the way the law is enforced. Seasons, size, limits, possession limits and sale restrictions do still apply to those under age 16. Not all persons under 16 are *completely* exempt from having a fishing license. Section 29.219(1)(b), only exempts residents under 16 from having a license to fish for fish. Section 29.228(1)(b), only exempts nonresidents under 16 from the need for a fishing license if fishing by hook and line or rod and reel. Therefore, a fishing or small game license will still be required for nonresidents younger than 16 who take turtles by any method other than hook and line or rod and reel.

- **Do you favor modifying rules so that residents younger than 16 would not need a fishing or small game license to take, possess, or control turtles taken**

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES	
BAYFIELD COUNTY	
by any method, and for nonresidents younger than 16, to have a fishing license to take turtles by hook and line or rod and reel, to reflect the intent of the law and the manner in which it is currently enforced?	34. YES _____ NO _____

Question 35: Pigeon lake bass regulations – replace 14" min/ 5 bag with 14"-18" protected slot and 3 fish daily bag limit

Pigeon Lake is a 213-acre seepage lake located within the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest in southern Bayfield County. A 1991 survey found a fishery dominated by largemouth bass and bluegill, with smaller but self-sustaining populations of northern pike, yellow perch, crappie and pumpkinseed. The bass population was considered excellent in terms of numbers and size structure. However, the bluegill fishery was poor in quality, as fish were abundant, slow-growing and few reached quality size (>6"). It was concluded that the existing bass and northern pike populations were ineffective in controlling bluegill numbers in the lake. Subsequently, a 5-year walleye stocking program was conducted from 1992 to 1998, with the main objective of providing greater predator control on the abundant bluegill population.

A fishery evaluation in 2003 indicated that walleye failed to establish a significant adult population (adult PE of 36) and, as such, were not providing adequate control over the abundant bluegill. The poor walleye success was due to low first-year survival of the stocked fingerlings, which was attributed to heavy competition/predation from the abundant Centrarchids (panfish and bass). The largemouth bass population had remained self-sustaining and relatively stable but it has failed to adequately control the bluegill population. In turn, the bluegill population had increased in abundance and the percent of quality size fish has remained very low. Once again, it was apparent the existing predator populations were ineffective in controlling bluegill in the 3" to 5" size. The current harvest regulation for bass is the 14-inch minimum and 5 daily bag.

Pigeon Lake would likely see an overall positive impact with the implementation of the proposed regulation. Bass anglers would still experience a quality angling opportunity where they would enjoy good catch rates of medium to large bass and still be allowed to harvest some of the more abundant smaller bass (that are also lower in contaminants). The biggest positive impact could be the improvement of the bluegill fishery.

Public involvement has included continuous consultation with the Pigeon Lake Association for the past 5 years. The WDNR, the US Forest Service and the Pigeon Lake Association have cooperated on several log fish-crib projects and in discussion regarding fish management on the lake. The proposal is supported by the Pigeon Lake Association.

- **Do you favor replacing the current 14" minimum and 5 fish daily bag limit for bass on Pigeon Lake (Bayfield County) with a 14" to 18" protected slot and 3 fish daily bag limit, where only one bass harvested may be longer than 18"?**

35. YES_____ NO_____

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

DODGE COUNTY

Question 36: Beaver Dam Lake walleye and sauger regulations – Extend sunset for 18” minimum/ 3 fish daily back limit regulation from March 31, 2007 to March 31, 2014.

Beaver Dam Lake, Dodge County, is a major source of local fishing opportunity for the angling public. However, the lake has historically required highly intensive effort on the part of fisheries management to produce and maintain such fishing opportunity, including two chemical treatments.

While the most recent chemical treatment was successful at removing carp and bullhead, the redevelopment of a desirable fishery initially appeared to be progressing much slower than had been predicted. However, since 1998, fishing opportunities on Beaver Dam Lake have improved, with anglers and Law Enforcement staff reporting good catches of bluegill, crappie, and walleye from the lake.

In order to protect the valuable walleye fishery on Beaver Dam Lake, an 18-inch minimum length limit; 3 fish per day regulation was enacted in 2002, with a five-year sunset clause, setting the regulation to expire in March 2007. Since enactment of the higher minimum size limit, the size distribution of walleye in Beaver Dam Lake has shifted, with several additional year classes present that were absent under the previous 15-inch minimum length limit regulation. While only in effect for three growing seasons, the regulation appears to be meeting the primary objective of maintaining and increasing the density of moderate and large adult walleye, and shifting the size distribution of the majority of walleye closer to 18 inches over time. Retaining the current regulation will allow for further evaluation of remaining objectives that could not be assessed within the limited, initial five-year sunset clause.

- **Do you favor extending the sunset for the 18-inch minimum length limit, 3 fish per day regulation for walleye, sauger, and their hybrids on Beaver Dam Lake, Dodge County, from March 31, 2007 to March 31, 2014, and including Mill Creek from the mouth upstream to the Fox Lake Dam, and all portions of Beaver Creek and all other tributaries to Beaver Dam Lake?**

36. YES _____ NO _____

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

DOOR COUNTY

Question 37: Kangaroo Lake walleye regulations – Increase the minimum length limit for walleye, sauger, and their hybrids on Kangaroo Lake from 15” to 18” and reduce the daily bag limit from 5 fish to 3 fish.

Kangaroo Lake is the largest lake in Door County and has a surface area of 1,123 acres. The lake has a maximum depth of 12 feet and an average depth of 6 feet. Kangaroo Lake has a Trophic State Index (TSI) rating of eutrophic indicating nutrient rich, productive water. At times, because the lake is shallow, lake water can be very turbid due to wind action or from heavy boating use.

A 2004 survey on Kangaroo Lake found that the walleye population had declined since previous surveys. Although walleye have been the most abundant gamefish captured in surveys since 1980, their abundance has been declining since 1983. As was the case in 1995, a large percentage of captured walleye in 2004 were juvenile fish. It appears that reproduction is good indicating recruitment into the population. Growth (length at age) is at or above statewide averages and is similar through age 8 to results from the 1995 survey. The presence of very old walleye (greater than 20 years of age) shows that walleye are able to survive in the lake although low adult abundance suggests that total annual mortality (natural and angler) is probably high.

While stocking of walleye may improve adult number over the short term, it will not improve the walleye population in the long term and may actually hurt the walleye population of the lake. Because we do see reproduction occurring, stocking is not recommended at this time. However, since it appears that walleye may not reach spawning age by the time they reach 15”, changes in the walleye minimum size and bag limit number are appropriate.

Modeling has indicated that the proposed walleye bag and size limits could yield 7.5 to 14% increases in the number of walleye reaching 18”, depending on the actual level of fishing mortality. Although this model does not take into account the effect of reducing the daily bag limit from 5 fish to 3 fish; it is likely that such a reduction would result in a decrease in harvest up to 13%, based upon Department creel surveys.

The Kangaroo Lake Association Board has unanimously voted to support this regulation change at their summer board meeting.

- **Do you favor increasing the minimum length limit for walleye, sauger, and their hybrids on Kangaroo Lake (Door County) from 15” to 18” and reducing the daily bag limit from 5 fish to 3 fish?**

37. YES_____ NO_____

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

LINCOLN COUNTY

Question 38: Muskellunge Lake bass regulations -- Increase the minimum size limit for largemouth and smallmouth bass from 14" to 18", and reduce the daily bag limit from 5 fish to 1 fish

Muskellunge Lake contains a very large population of 3-5 inch, slow growing bluegill. The largemouth bass population density is less than it needs to be to control these stunted bluegills. This regulation is needed to increase the number of largemouth bass, which will thin out the bluegill, allowing more of them to reach a harvestable size before they start dying of natural causes (old age). The Muskellunge Lake Association wants this regulation for the lake.

- **Do you favor changing the bass regulations on Muskellunge Lake (Lincoln County) from a 14-inch minimum size limit and daily bag of 5 bass to an 18-inch minimum size limit and daily bag limit of 1 bass?**

38. YES _____ NO _____

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

ONEIDA COUNTY

QUESTION 39: Oneida Lake bass regulation – Eliminate the 18-inch minimum length limit and establish a protected slot limit of 14 to 18 inches, and increase the daily bag limit from 1 to 3 with a restriction of only 1 fish longer than 18 inches allowed on Oneida Lake, Oneida County.

Under the current 18-inch minimum length limit, small bass are abundant in Oneida Lake. A 2003 survey found strong recruitment and high numbers of smaller bass. High bass numbers can have a negative impact on recruitment of other game species, and bass could impact the Oneida Lake walleye population if the current 18-inch minimum length limit is left in place. This rule will protect larger bass while allowing harvest opportunity and thinning of the smaller bass. The intended result is fewer bass, but higher growth rates and larger average size.

- **Do you favor replacing the current 18" minimum and 1 fish daily bag limit for bass on Oneida Lake (Oneida County) with a 14" to 18" protected slot and 3 fish daily bag limit, where only one fish harvested may be longer than 18"?**

39. YES _____ NO _____

Question 40: Pelican Lake muskellunge regulation – Increase the minimum length limit to 50 inches on Pelican Lake, Oneida County.

Pelican Lake has a naturally-reproducing muskellunge population (no stocking since 1998) of low to moderate density with a track record of producing a few exceptional fish. However, under the current 34-inch minimum length limit, Pelican Lake is not reaching its full potential to produce quality-size muskellunge. The last creel survey (1990) found that angler effort on Pelican Lake of 62.3 hours per acre is nearly double the Oneida County average (33.7 hours per acre), with 18% of total effort directed at muskellunge. The survey estimated that 146 muskellunge were harvested. Muskellunge reproduction may be insufficient to sustain this level of harvest. A local proposal by interested muskellunge anglers and guides received a favorable reception at the July 9, 2005 annual meeting of the Pelican Lake Property Owners Association, where 78% of the 89 attendees supported a higher minimum length limit, while 18% were against and 3% indifferent. Furthermore, a 50-inch minimum length limit (57% of positive votes) was more popular with Association members than either a 45-inch minimum (24%) or 40 to 50-inch protected slot (19%).

- **Do you favor increasing the minimum length limit to 50 inches for muskellunge on Pelican Lake, Oneida County?**

40. YES _____ NO _____

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

POLK COUNTY

Question 41: Big Butternut Lake bass regulations – Eliminate the 14” minimum length limit for largemouth and smallmouth bass in Big Butternut Lake, Polk County.

Big Butternut Lake is a 378-acre drainage lake located in north central Polk County in Luck, Wisconsin. The lake was surveyed in 2003-2004. Historically a robust walleye fishery was present with an adult density of 4.7 fish/acre in 1990. In 2003, the adult walleye population estimate decreased to 1.0 fish/acre. This is a 77% decrease over the past 13 years. Over the same time period, the surveys document an increase in largemouth bass abundance. Historic fall electrofishing surveys indicate that the relative abundance of walleye has decreased from 148 fish/hr in 1975 to 1 fish/hr in 2003. Conversely, largemouth bass relative abundance has increased 1,850% from 8/hr in 1985 to 156/hr in 2003.

Walleye abundance in 2003 was below the management goal of 2.0 -4.0 adult fish/acre. The suboptimal walleye population may be due to two factors. First, walleye natural reproduction is currently non-existent in Big Butternut Lake, whereas historically it appeared some natural reproduction contributed to the fishery (Cornelius 1992). Second, small fingerling walleye stocking has generally failed during the 1990 through present date, whereas it appeared to be very successful prior to 1990. It is suspected that largemouth bass are impeding successful recruitment of walleye in Big Butternut Lake. This proposal is designed to encourage anglers to harvest more largemouth bass from the lake, with the management goal of improving walleye abundance.

- **Do you favor eliminating the 14” minimum length limit and retaining the 5 fish daily bag limit for bass in Big Butternut Lake, Polk County?**

41. YES_____ NO_____

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

SAWYER COUNTY

Questions 42-43: Nelson Lake bass and pike regulations –remove 14” size limit for bass and retain 5 fish daily bag limit, and increase northern pike size limit from “no minimum” to 32” and reduce daily bag limit from 5 fish to 1 fish.

In July 2004, the Department of Natural Resources conducted a Lake Management Planning Meeting designed to get public for setting management goals for Nelson Lake, Sawyer County. The public in attendance was strongly in favor of restoring a self-sustaining (NR) walleye population. Furthermore, they are willing to lower populations of bass to get there. Bass may have played a role in the walleye's decline and could make walleye restoration more difficult. The public also continues to support a quality panfish, and a trophy northern pike fishery. A program to restock large fingerling walleye has already begun. These regulation strategies are required to reach the goals of the Nelson Lake Fishery Management Plan. They are designed to restrict harvest of and protect walleye, and trophy northern pike; while using liberalized angling harvest to reduce bass population density.

- **Do you favor removing the 14” minimum and retaining the 5 fish daily bag limit for bass in Nelson Lake, Sawyer County?**

42. YES _____ NO _____

- **Do you favor increasing the minimum length limit for northern pike in Nelson Lake from no minimum to 32” and reducing the daily bag limit from 5 fish to 1 fish?**

43. YES _____ NO _____

Question 44: Smith Lake panfish regulations – Reduce the daily bag limit for panfish on Smith Lake, Sawyer County, from 25 fish to 10 fish.

Smith Lake in Sawyer County is at risk of over-harvest for quality size panfish. Lake groups have approached the DNR requesting a reduction in the daily bag limit for panfish, and the local fisheries manager agrees that the proposal has merit. The same regulation has already been applied to six similar lakes in this county.

- **Do you favor reducing the daily bag for panfish on Smith Lake, Sawyer County, from 25 per day to 10 per day?**

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

VILAS COUNTY

44. YES _____ NO _____

Question 45: Kentuck Lake bass regulations – Increase the minimum length limit from 14" to 18" and reduce the daily bag limit from 5 fish to 1 fish for largemouth and smallmouth bass in Kentuck Lake, Vilas County.

The current 14 inch minimum size limit and 5 fish bag limit is not adequate to protect this bass fishery. A recent change of this lake to a walleye dominated fishery may result in declines in the bass fishery. This was the case in the early 1980's when walleye were very abundant in the lake. It is recommended to change the bass regulation on this lake to an 18 inch minimum length and 1 fish daily bag limit. The goal of this regulation is to maintain current bass catch rates, improve quality, and potentially control abundance of rusty crayfish.

- **Do you favor increasing the minimum length limit from 14 inches to 18 inches and reducing the daily bag limit from 5 fish to 1 in total for bass on Kentuck Lake, Vilas County?**

45. YES _____ NO _____

Question 46: Pallette Lake bass regulations – Eliminate the 16-inch minimum length limit and daily bag of two and establish a 22-inch minimum length limit and daily bag of one bass on Pallette Lake, Vilas County.

Pallette Lake is one of 5 lakes that comprise the Northern Highlands Fishery Research Area. An experimental 16" minimum length limit for smallmouth bass has been in effect since 1989, and has been thoroughly evaluated. Under the current 16" minimum length limit, smallmouth bass are not reaching their growth potential in Pallette Lake even though very few anglers are keeping bass. This rule will protect bass so they have a chance to reach their size potential while allowing the opportunity to harvest a true "trophy". The intended result is more "trophy" bass, higher catch rates of 20" fish, and more angling interest.

- **Do you favor increasing the minimum length limit from 16" to 22" inches and reducing the daily bag limit from 2 fish to 1 fish for bass in Pallette Lake, Vilas County?**

46. YES _____ NO _____

PROPOSED LOCAL FISHERIES RULE CHANGES

WAUSHARA COUNTY

Question 47: Long Lake muskellunge and northern pike regulations – Remove special regulations for northern pike and muskellunge on Long Lake, Waushara County.

Long Lake has been used as a rearing area for brood stock spotted muskellunge as part of the Green bay/ Fox River spotted muskellunge restoration effort. In talks with the Long Lake Association, the Department has agreed to discontinue the use of Long Lake as a brood lake for spotted muskellunge.

Under this program, the Department closed fishing for muskellunge and implemented a 32" minimum size limit for northern pike, to help eliminate the chance that anglers would unknowingly harvest juvenile musky. This proposal would remove these two special regulations, and the regulations for musky and northern pike would revert to the statewide regulations (34" minimum, 1 fish daily bag limit for musky; 26" minimum, 2 fish daily bag limit for northern pike).

- **Do you favor removing the special regulations for northern pike and muskellunge on Long Lake, Waushara County, so they would revert to the statewide regulations (34" minimum, 1 fish daily bag limit for musky; 26" minimum, 2 fish daily bag limit for northern pike)?**

47. YES _____ NO _____

Questions 48-50: Gilbert, Pearl, and Pine Lake trout regulations – Extend the open season for trout in Gilbert, Pearl, and Pine Lakes.

The We Really Kare (WRK) Fishing Club, in Waushara County, raises money and promotes better fishing on a handful of lakes through stocking trout. In the springs of 2004 and 2005, WRK stocked rainbow trout in Pine and Gilbert Lakes. The Pearl Lake Association also began a trout stocking program on Pearl Lake. These lakes primarily provide put-and-take trout fisheries, and holdovers from year-to-year are present but limited. This proposal would change the open season for trout in these three lakes from "the first Saturday in May through September 30" to "the first Saturday in May through the first Sunday in March," to allow anglers further opportunity to harvest stocked trout. Most lakes with stocked trout fisheries are also open through the first Sunday in March.

Questions are on the following page.

- Do you favor changing the open season for trout on Gilbert Lake, Waushara County from “the first Saturday in May through September 30” to “the first Saturday in May through the first Sunday in March?”

48. YES_____ NO_____

- Do you favor changing the open season for trout on Pearl Lake, Waushara County from “the first Saturday in May through September 30” to “the first Saturday in May through the first Sunday in March?”

49. YES_____ NO_____

- Do you favor changing the open season for trout on Pine Lake, Waushara County from “the first Saturday in May through September 30” to “the first Saturday in May through the first Sunday in March?”

50. YES_____ NO_____